United Nations

Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- Secretary-General, in annual report on United Nations, says new vision of development is needed to tackle root causes of conflict; highlights Organization's work in economic and social fields.

- Security Council extends UNOSOM II for one month, pending thorough examination of mandate; United States abstains from vote on resolution, saying time has come to conclude Operation.

- Security Council, in resolution adopted last night, extends mandate of UNAVEM II until 31 October; decides not to impose new measures against UNITA in view of ongoing Angolan peace process.

- Spain says financial crisis threatens ability of United Nations to resolve conflicts; Lithuania, Venezuela, Cambodia, Egypt and Turkey among other speakers in General Assembly general debate today.

- Azerbaijan says it will abide by cease-fire in Nagorny Karabakh; Italy, Peru, Austria, Oman, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Micronesia and Kyrgyz Republic among other speakers in yesterday's general debate.

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The primary mission for the United Nations at the beginning of its second half-century will be to redefine and fulfil a vision of development in order to prevent conflict, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In his annual report on the work of the Organization, he said security meant far more than questions of land and weapons. The United Nations had been misperceived as dedicated primarily to peace-keeping, even though it had long devoted most of its efforts to economic and social questions.

"The United Nations must renew and strengthen its commitment to work in the economic and social fields as an end in itself, and as the means of attending to the sources of conflicts", the Secretary-General stated. Efforts to build enduring foundations for a secure, just and creative era required a continuing commitment on the part of all nations. However, that commitment was far from satisfactory today.

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The Secretary-General noted that peace, the economy, the environment, society and democracy were interlinked dimensions of development. Peace provided a context for development; a growing economy generated resources; a protected environment allowed development sustainable; healthy social conditions strengthened the social fabric; and democracy fostered stability. A comprehensive vision was needed for progress on the entire range of development issues.

He stressed the need for timely and effective humanitarian action, citing the crises in Rwanda, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia. It was important to ensure continuing financial support for recovering States, to prevent the collapse of fledgling socio-economic and political structures. He went on to call attention to the Organization's critical financial situation, especially with regard to peace-keeping operations.

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The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) for one month to 31 October, prior to which it will undertake a thorough examination of the Operation's mandate with a view to deciding on its future. The Council took that action by adopting resolution 946 (1994) by 14 votes in favour to none against, with the United States abstaining.

The Council encouraged the Secretary-General to continue with and intensify preparations of contingency arrangements for the implementation of possible decisions it might take, including withdrawal of UNOSOM II. It also declared its readiness to consider sending a Council mission to convey directly to the Somali parties its views on the situation in the country and on the future of the United Nations presence there.

The United States said the time had come to bring UNOSOM II to a conclusion. It noted that the situation in Somalia had deteriorated steadily and that attacks on peace-keepers had increased, while promises to the United Nations had been broken. The Operation was draining resources which could be better used elsewhere.

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The Security Council decided last night to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) until 31 October. In view of the current negotiations and the formal acceptance by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) of the proposals of the Secretary-General and the three observer States, the Council said it would not impose additional measures against UNITA.

In unanimously adopting resolution 945 (1994), the Council deplored the intensification of military actions throughout Angola and reiterated its demand that both parties cease all military operations. It also affirmed its readiness to consider promptly restoring UNAVEM II to its previous authorized level once an agreement was initialed by the parties.

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The Council condemned any action which threatened the delivery of humanitarian assistance and put the lives of relief workers at risk. It called for the full cocperation of all parties, especially UNITA. The Council also expressed grave concern over the disappearance of humanitarian relief workers on 27 August and demanded their immediate release.

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Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana Madariaga said some changes in recent years had threatened the Organization's ability to contribute efficiently to the resolution of conflicts. United Nations resources were stretched to the limit, and the Organization was undergoing a financial crisis which could not be addressed without the cooperation of Member States. Timely payment of financial contributions was an obligation specified in the Charter. Spain favoured a revision of the Security Council's membership based on the criteria of representativity, efficiency and transparency. A moderate increase would facilitate equitable geographical representation.

Spain had special ties of friendship with the Arab Maghreb countries and sought to help overcome the problems in the area, he continued. The solution to the Western Sahara problem lay in the holding of a referendum with appropriate international guarantees. Spain supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to implement the settlement plan accepted by the parties. The decolonization of Gibraltar was a priority. The General Assembly had clearly established that it was not a case of self-determination but of the restoration of Spain's territorial integrity. His Government would continue the process of negotiations with the United Kingdom, in accordance with the Declaration of Brussels of 1984, taking into account the legitimate interests of the population.

Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas told the General Assembly that the foreign and defence policies of the Baltic countries must be even more closely coordinated. Lithuania sought to guarantee its security, stability and well-being by joining European political, economic and security structures. It had never lost its European heritage, and its goal remained membership of the European Union. Lithuania's security and stability also demanded closer cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and it had presented a formal request for membership.

Lithuania attached great importance to its relations with the Russian Federation, he continued. It hoped that the new Russia would not obstruct the integration of the Baltic countries into European structures. With its geopolitical situation and its economic opportunities, Lithuania was prepared to be a bridge between East and West. However, it would not accept a future as a buffer State. He welcomed President Boris Yeltsin's statement that Russia rejected the imposition of its will on weaker States, and the reduction of the Russian military presence in the Kalingrad district. He also welcomed Russia's joining in the "Partnership for Peace" programme. The expansion of NATO eastward would not pose a threat to any European State, and Russian fears of isolation were groundless.

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The President of Venezuela, Rafael Caldera, noted that fundamental concepts of nationality and sovereignty were being reconsidered so that inalienable and traditional rights could exist in harmony with the requirements of the supranational community. Venezuela favoured the peaceful spread of democracy to every nation, especially those in Latin America. It had not supported the military intervention in Haiti, despite the fact that the United Nations had endorsed the operation with multilateral support. Venezuela advocated further United Nations reform, including the widening of permanent representation on the Security Council. Latin America should be represented by Brazil.

The current rapid process of globalization was unavoidable, he said. The conclusion of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the creation of the World Trade Organization represented undeniable progress for mankind. It was encouraging that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recognized the battle against poverty as a top priority. Developing countries must be guaranteed access to the markets of the developed countries. While Venezuela supported environmental protection, the ecological struggle had sometimes been used hypocritically to deny developing countries access to the markets of wealthy nations.

Prince Norodom Sirivudh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, expressed deep gratitude to Member States and other donors for their support in the reconstruction of his country. Cambodia had been through a holocaust of tyranny, invasion and internal disturbances. The National Assembly was now in the process of restoring Cambodia as a judicial state where human rights, political pluralism, liberal democracy and freedom of expression were respected. Cambodia was the only country in the region to have requested the Secretary-General to dispatch a special representative for human rights.

Because of its own experience, Cambodia felt deeply for the plight of the ordinary people of Rwanda, he continued. He commended the international community for its intervention there, particularly the prompt military action of France. He expressed the hope that the Declaration by the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be fully implemented. Cambodia strongly supported the earnest desire of the Korean people for reunification. Cambodia looked forward to full membership in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). After more than 20 years of war, it was eager to become reintegrated into the international community.

Egypt's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amre Moussa, expressed satisfaction that the Cairo Conference had adopted a programme of action dealing with population questions from a cultural and development perspective, based on a profound understanding of the problem. The clamour associated with the Conference had been warranted and even beneficial. It was necessary to respect all religions, the virtues they advocated and the framework they set forth to guide the lives of individuals and nations. Sponsorship of international conferences enhanced the role of the United Nations in determining the world of tomorrow, which must be based on equitable development, collective security and social stability.

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Durable peace in the Middle East required new relations among the countries of the region based on political settlement, socio-economic development, and regional security and arms control. He called on Israel and other countries in the region to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to accept the application of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Libya had a clear political will to put an end to the crisis concerning the crash of a PanAm flight over Lockerbie. The more expeditiously the prosecution of suspects took place, the better would be the process of justice.

Mumtaz Soysal, Turkey's Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that despite United Nations resolutions, the international community had not ended ethnic cleansing or rolled back aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina. The lack of effective enforcement measures had encouraged the aggressors to proceed with their genocidal campaign and to defy international law. The international community should stand by its commitments and start acting resolutely. Only diplomacy backed by sufficient force could make the extremist Serbs realize that "more war gives them more pain than gain". There should be no further easing of sanctions until the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) recognized all successor States within their international borders.

Misinformation and propaganda continued to lead the international community into perpetuating the conditions imposed upon the Turkish people of Cyprus, he said. Turkish Cypriots remained totally isolated due to international restrictions on trade, travel and cultural contacts. The embargo was maintained as a result of "a relentless campaign of distortion of the facts relating to the history of events on the island for the last 31 years". A United Nations-sponsored confidence-building package, aimed at alleviating the effects of the embargo, had deliberately been torpedoed by the other party. A comprehensive solution would only be achieved by removing obstacles to the implementation of the confidence-building measures.

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The President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Alirza ogly Aliyev, told the General Assembly yesterday that there had been a war in his country for six years. Under the pretext of realizing the right to self-determination of ethnic Armenians living in Nagorny Karabakh, Armenia was carrying out plans to annex parts of Azerbaijan. Such an interpretation of the right to self-determination contradicted the principles of State sovereignty and territorial integrity. More than 20 per cent of Azerbaijan was now occupied by Armenia's armed forces. More than 20,000 people had been killed, and more than 1 million Azerbaijanis had become refugees.

The Security Council had adopted four resolutions and made six presidential statements in connection with the occupation, all of which had been ignored by Armenia, he continued. The Council had failed to implement its resolutions. Efforts to implement resolutions designed to settle regional conflicts only succeed when endorsed by political and military means, he stated. Azerbaijan would provide guarantees to the Armenian population of

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Nagorny Karabakh. It was also ready to discuss the status of Nagorny Karabakh within the Azerbaijani State, but respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and withdrawal from all occupied territories would remain constant demands. Azerbaijan would also abide by the cease-fire agreement until a peace was reached.

Italy's Foreign Minister, Antonio Martino, said yesterday that his country would remain steadfast in supporting the United Nations, and that it was seeking Security Council membership for the 1995-1996 period. He noted that peace-keeping operations currently cost three times as much as the United Nations regular budget, and stressed that the Organization's capacity for preventive diplomacy had to be strengthened. Italy was promoting the establishment of a task force for rapid intervention in humanitarian emergencies.

Speaking in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), he said that organization was actively promoting peaceful solutions to several regional crises. In the former Yugoslavia, it was engaged in restoring long-term missions, among other efforts. CSCE missions would also be established in Ukraine and Georgia. A proposal had been made to the Secretary-General that the CSCE be given primary responsibility for issues concerning stability and security in its area, without impinging on the statutory powers of the Security Council. The two organizations should adopt a standard set of principles for peace-keeping activities undertaken by individual States or third parties.

Efraín Goldenberg Schreiber, Peru's Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, stressed his country's determination to continue the fight against illegal drug trafficking. International cooperation was indispensable, and the recent summit of the Rio Group had agreed to harmonize legislation to penalize money laundering and to enable confiscation of property linked to drug trafficking. Swifter extradition procedures and greater judicial and police cooperation had also been agreed on.

Having assured its democracy and economic freedom, Peru now had remarkable prospects, he said. The gross domestic product (GDP) had grown by 7 per cent last year and was projected to rise by 9 to 10 per cent this year. Those figures constituted the highest rates in the hemisphere. The new situation would allow the Government to give social issues the priority they deserved. The economic policies implemented in Peru had made possible a social programme based on non-inflationary investment and the use of domestic resources.

Alois Mock, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, said the Security Council should be strengthened and its membership increased slightly. The Council must take into account the interests of each State involved in a particular issue, as in the case of troop-contributing countries. Financial stability was vital for the Organization, he stressed, noting that failure to pay assessments was a violation of the Charter. The

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burden of non-payment fell upon those States which regularly met their obligations. The chronic financial situation could only be resolved through prompt and full payment of assessments.

The promotion and protection of human rights was a primary function of the United Nations, he stated. The success of the Vienna Declaration would be measured by the international community's willingness to implement all its provision. Since the position of High Commissioner for Human Rights had been created, it had been used to promote an international dialogue on human rights. History had taught that all violations of human rights must be vigorously opposed. However, the resolution adopted by the Vienna Conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina had remained a dead letter. There had been no response to the call for action. He paid tribute to the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina for carrying on a dialogue with those who had carried out a kind of genocide against his people.

Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdulla, Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, said a new climate of understanding and coexistence was emerging between the Arabs and Israel. They had no alternative but to resolve their differences through negotiations. A just and lasting peace was unlikely to prevail until a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories in accordance with Security Council resolutions, and implementation of the land-for-peace principle. He welcomed the outcome of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, which had culminated in the signing of the Cairo Agreement, and called on the international community to continue providing the Palestinian authority with assistance.

Oman was committed to regional cooperation and development, he continued. It welcomed the agreement by Bahrain and Qatar to resort to the International Court of Justice to settle their differences over the disputed islands and maritime border. Oman hoped that Iran and the United Arab Emirates could settle their territorial differences in a friendly and peaceful manner. Iraq had recently taken positive steps towards implementing the Security Council resolution on weapons of mass destruction. The Council should make contact with both Iraq and Kuwait to put into effect its resolution on the demarcation of the international border between the two States.

Bulgarian Foreign Minister Stanislav Daskalov told the General Assembly that his country would not directly or indirectly participate in any military activities in the former Yugoslavia, even under the United Nations flag. He called on the other Balkan States to adopt the same approach, saying restraint should be the key word for the Balkan region. In the present circumstances, Bulgaria did not favour the lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia and Herzegovina. He appealed to the Bosnian Serb leadership to accept the proposed peace settlement and comply with the norms of civilized behaviour.

United Nations sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) had caused significant losses to Bulgaria, he said. The sanctions came at a time of major economic transformations in Bulgaria and damaged it politically, economically and socially. Bulgaria was unable to

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bear the burden, given the lack of adequate financial, economic and trade assistance. The effectiveness of the Security Council would increase considerably if the positions of neighbouring countries and regional organizations were taken into account in the decision-making process.

Jacques Poos, Luxembourg's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that in light of the financial constraints on the United Nations, greater reliance would have to be placed on regional organizations. Although only the United Nations had the international legitimacy to use force, regional organizations could carry out certain mandates with great effectiveness. Luxembourg welcomed a more flexible interpretation of the principle of non-intervention. That principle should not be used to shield atrocious acts and massive violations of human rights.

The links between development and peace could not be disregarded, he continued. If there was deterioration in one area, the whole could become destabilized. The United Nations was the appropriate place to search for solutions. The vision of the future could not include privation and misery in so many areas of the world, where people were deprived of their fundamental right to nourishment, education, water and a roof over their heads. Luxembourg intended to double its level of assistance by the year 2000. On United Nations reform, there should be strict budgetary management, and money should no longer be wasted on operations whose purposes were ill defined. He welcomed the creation of a more rigorous financial inspection system.

Resio Moses, Secretary for External Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia, said his country was immediately concerned with such issues as climate change, sustainable development, nuclear waste and natural disasters. He noted that the South Pacific Forum had recently decided to seek observer status at the United Nations during the current session of the General Assembly. As an observer, the Forum could increase the effectiveness of the South Pacific region's work on such critical issues as conservation of biodiversity and implementation of the recommendations of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Micronesia welcomed the continued moratorium on nuclear testing by France and the United States, he said. However, it remained deeply concerned at the possible consequences of China's insistence on proceeding with testing. The Pacific region's vastness and seeming emptiness made it an attractive location for environmentally dangerous activities. Micronesia remained unalterably opposed to the use of the region by countries which were not willing to store their wastes within their own borders. He went on to welcome the universal acceptance of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and its imminent entry into force.

Rosa Otunbayeva, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, said preventive diplomacy, confidence-building measures and early recognition of conflict situations were especially important after the fall of totalitarianism. A legal basis should be established to allow the United Nations to help resolve disputes over the delineation of borders, the division of water and natural resources, self-determination and respect for territorial

integrity, and the protection of minorities. To provide such a basis, the Organization could launch a study of typical conflict situations and establish approaches, principles and paths for their resolution.

As a country in need of assistance due to natural disasters and social hardships, Kyrgyzstan supported the creation of a civilian service to provide immediate humanitarian aid under the auspices of the United Nations, she continued. It also shared the objectives and parameters set out in the Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Development". Kyrgyzstan was committed to the ideas of friendship and concord. It was consistently working on programmes to halt emigration and to preserve the multi-ethnic composition of its society.

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